



The Lily Pad

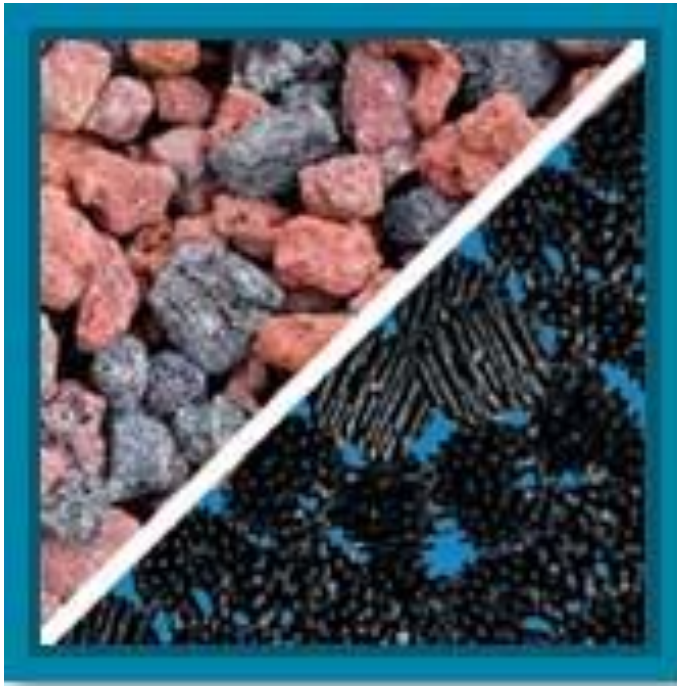
The Topeka Area Water Garden Society

Published Monthly – February to November

The objective of the society is to encourage a greater appreciation and interest in water gardening and aquatic plants, to disseminate information about those interests and to help our members stimulate the study and culture of water gardens.

Volume 18, Issue 3

April 1, 2015



Bioballs verses lava rock

The Pond Guy, 3-7-15

The media you use in your filtration system matters. Just think about its purpose: To house billions of beneficial bacteria and other microorganisms that keep your pond alive, crystal clear and algae-free. Thanks to their ample surface area, both lava rock and bioballs will work, but bioballs have some benefits over the rock. Read on to learn more.

Lava Rock's Limitations

Lava rock – that igneous rock that's formed as an erupting volcano's molten lava cools and hardens – is very porous. When chunks of it live in your filtration system, you're providing a lot of surface area for those beneficial bacteria to colonize and grow. That's what makes it such a great filter media.

It does, however, have its drawbacks.

- **Clogged Holes:** Over time, the porous rock can become easily clogged with muck and debris.

Monthly Meeting

7:00 p.m.

April 15, 2015

Historic Old Prairie Town, 124 NW Fillmore

Speaker

To be announced

Once the holes and pockets are clogged, they can become very difficult to clean out – which ultimately creates less overall surface area.

- **Hard Water:** Lava rock naturally contains a variety of minerals, including iron and magnesium, that could affect your water's pH, making it harder. Hard water could make it more difficult to treat algae that forms.
- **It's Heavy!:** They may be porous chunks of rock, but hefting bags of it takes some strength – particularly when its wet and full of gunk.

Benefits of BioBalls

Bioballs, like The Pond Guy® BioBalls™ filter media, are plastic spheres made up of dozens of thin rods that provide plenty of surface area for beneficial bacteria to thrive. Two hundred of the bioballs in a mesh bag will filter about 1,000 gallons of water in a pond with minimal fish.

Compared to lava rock, bioballs have some definite benefits.

- **Easy to Clean:** Bioballs can also become clogged, but they're easy to clean. Just rinse them off with water from your pond and you'll be good to go.
- **Indefinite Lifetime:** Because they're made from long-lasting material, bioballs will not degrade and will function equally well year after year.
- **Shape Shifters:** The bioballs' round shape allows them to more easily conform to any filter,

no matter its shape.

- **Lightweight, Easy to Handle:** Each one of these tiny, 1 1/2-inch plastic spheres weighs a scant 0.3 ounces; 200 of them weigh a whopping 3 1/2 pounds. They're easy to deposit and remove from your filter thanks to a mesh filter bag.

Consider making the switch from lava rock to bioballs. You'll see better results and you'll need to do less maintenance. What's better than that?

Minutes March 18, 2015

President Tom Platis called the meeting to order. A thank you note from Doris Hammond was shared with the group for welcoming her to the meeting she attended last August at Jim and Sue Mowder's pond. Another thank you note was shared from Martina Bulk with the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation thanking the members who helped prune roses in the rose garden in spring of 2014.

Two names, Becky Holmquist and Dot Frost, were drawn from the entries for bluebird houses that were collected at the Garden Show. Chris Newell will contact the winners and make arrangements to get the birdhouses to them.

A thank you note will be sent to Dennis Lowry for the birdhouses and for the use of the arbor and the bridge used in the booth at the Garden Show.

The treasurer's report showed a beginning balance of \$1593.26, an outflow of \$152.22, leaving an ending balance of \$1441.04.

Don Taliaferro made a motion to accept last month's treasurer's report, with Don Rieger seconding the motion. A motion was made to accept the minutes of last month by Don Taliaferro and seconded by Cheryl Saathoff.

There was discussion about combining garden and pond tours with TBA. Tom Platis will visit with the TBA president about this idea.

There was further discussion on gaining more members for TAWGS. Chris Newell has put together a new member list and will send to Jim Mowder, who will forward it on to Diane Gruver. It was decided to call current members on the list to find out why they are not coming to meetings anymore, what they would like to see happen with the organization; if they might be interested in being on the pond tour and sitting at a pond during the tours; if they know anyone who might be interested in TAWGS. Sandy Rieger volunteered to make these calls.

Chris N. made a motion to create a new committee to find new projects for the group to be involved. Don Taliferro seconded the motion. Chris Newell, Don Taliferro and Sherry Reed said they would be on this committee.

Another committee was formed for the 2016 Lawn and Garden Show. Chris Newell suggested joining with a swimming pool company to get a pool and larger pump to make a waterfall large enough to walk under. Chris Newell, Don Taliaferro and Bob Saathoff will serve on this committee.

It was also discussed that a larger storage space may be needed for the equipment owned by TAWGS which

is now stored at Waterscapes. It was thought that a storage facility might exchange a storage unit for a water feature made by TAWGS. Chris Newell will talk to the manager at ADAPA about that possibility.

Don Taliaferro made a motion for the TAWGS group to buy a memory brick at Ward-Meade memory garden for Susan Kraus in lieu of flowers. Don Rieger seconded this motion. Tom Platis will write a letter to Susan's husband about our intentions for the brick. Jim Mowder will contact John Bell about the brick after notification of Mr. Kraus.

Don Taliaferro made a motion to adjourn, Linda Reynolds seconded the motion.

Sherry Reed, Secretary



Does shape matter?

The Pond Guy 3-13-15

Round, oblong, square, kidney-shaped, oval or otherwise, ponds come in all shapes and sizes. In most cases, they're designed to fit into and

enhance their environment. But does shape matter? Read on to learn more.

Tried-and-True Standards

Many ponds are curved and centered toward the viewing area – and there's a good reason for that. An oval- or kidney-shaped pond allows you to see more of your water garden from one place. Imagine sitting on your deck or patio and enjoying a 180-degree view of your natural-looking waterscape. When compared to a perfectly round or square pond in the middle of your yard, you can see why one might have more aesthetic appeal than another.

Oval- or kidney-shaped ponds also allow for optimum circulation, particularly when a RapidFlo™ Ecosystem Pond Kit or AllClear™ Ecosystem Pond Kit is installed. A waterfall located at one end of a slightly curved pond will gently push the water toward your skimmer or pump for circulation and filtration. Round ponds or those with many coves or inlets may have areas of little circulation, which will require extra waterfalls, fountains or pumps to move the water and prevent it from stagnating.

Outside the Oval

Of course, if you want to play with pond shapes and design a waterscape that's outside the ordinary, have at it! A rectangular pond teeming with colorful koi could be a stunning centerpiece in a modern-themed yard. A haphazardly shaped pond outlined with irises and arrowhead could transform a suburban postage-stamp yard into a natural wonderland. Just be sure you provide adequate aeration to all its corners and coves.

Regardless of its shape or size, a koi pond or water garden will make a valuable addition to your yard.

Check out magazines for inspiration. Pin favorites on Pinterest. Sketch out your ideas.

Winter hard on pond and rocks

The Pond Guy 3-21-15

Ice and snow can certainly do a number on a landscape – if you’ve ever seen how a glacier can carve through the earth, you know what we’re



talking about! Around your pond, the same type of thing can occur, albeit on a smaller scale. Ice, snow and even heavy bouts of rain can shift rocks and soil, cause erosion and move or puncture your liner, resulting in leaks.

So what can be done? You’ll need to do some investigating to determine where the problem is and then get busy making repairs. Here’s what we suggest.

1. Rock Steady

Because the rocks shifted over the winter, the first thing to do is return them to their original position them and lock them into place. As you move the rocks back, check to see if they tore the liner or shifted it out of place. If so, patch the hole and tuck the liner back in. Use PondBuilder™ PondBuild ‘N Foam to fill in gaps between the rocks, support them and prevent them from moving again next winter.

2. Rule Out Evaporation

During the heat of summer, you can expect some evaporation – and it can cause your pond to lose up to an inch of water a day. If you have a long stream bed with a lot of surface area or a large pond with few floating plants, even more water could transform from liquid to vapor. To rule out evaporation, fill the pond back up and keep an eye on the water level. Any more than an inch or so of water loss could indicate a leak.

3. Check for Damp Spots

If more than an inch or so of water is disappearing daily, one clear clue that could lead to your leak is a damp area around the pond’s perimeter. That water has to go somewhere, and a low-lying patch of wet ground is a great place to start looking for its source. Walk around the pond and carefully inspect the soil for signs of unexplained moisture.

4. Rule Out the Liner

If you’ve ruled out evaporation and found no damp areas, there are two more possible leak culprits: your waterfall or your liner. Shut down waterfall pump and wait for several hours. If the pond’s water level stays the same, then you’ll know the leak is not in the liner itself. It’s likely in the waterfall or plumbing. Check your waterfall box and skimmer for cracks or if the liner isn’t attached, and inspect

your plumbing for loose connections.

5. Track, Repair Liner Leak

At this point, the bad news is that you probably have a hole in your liner, and finding it won’t be easy. But the good news is that it is possible to track it down and repair it.

To find it, use Pond Logic® Pond Shade or some milk to visually track the leak. Simply add a few drops on the side and watch it as it finds its way to the leak. This will take some time, a few attempts — and patience. You can also let the water slowly go down. (Depending how low it goes, you may need to temporarily relocate your fish.) The water level should stabilize, which will allow you to visually inspect the first few inches of liner above the water surface for the hole.

Once you’ve found the hole, patch it up with an EPDM Liner Patch Kit or use some Gold Label Pond Sealer. The 6-inch liner patch is easy to use on small punctures: Just peel off the protective film and press onto the liner. The sealer can be used in wet or dry conditions and will seal completely in 48 hours.

Good luck tracking down that leak and repairing it!



Spring fish feeding tips

Reprinted from 3-15-02 Splash

Fish will start to want and need some nourishment when the water warms above 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Sometimes it is hard to tell whether or not they should be fed. When in doubt (because of wild temperature fluctuations) feed late in the afternoon when the water is warmest. Start very slowly, the bacteria culture in the pond has to grow yet or it will not be able to handle all the fish waste. Once a day feeding is sufficient until the water temperature rises to 60 degrees, and no more than the fish can eat in 3 - 5 minutes. Fish out any uneaten food, so it does not foul the water!

Watch fish closely during feeding. This is a very stressful time for fish and they are easily attacked by parasites and bacteria. Check the salt level in the pond! Any disease, parasite problems, etc. should be dealt with immediately, before they spread to the other fish (most are contagious).

It is best to feed an easily digestible Spring Food, particularly to Koi! Koi do not have stomachs, they digest everything in their intestines and their intestines do not work as well in lower temperatures!

Water plants

By Duane Van Dolah

Chinese lizard tail, *saururus chinensis*

A pond plant with heart-shaped leaves, the Chinese lizard tail has white splotches on the topmost leaves with the rest of the foliage being bright green, giving the plant **page 4**

Topeka Area Water Garden Society
 9900 SW K-4 Highway
 Topeka, KS 66614

April 15	Monthly Meeting
May 20	Monthly Meeting
June 17	Fish Fry at Saathoff's
July 15	Monthly Meeting
August 19	Monthly Meeting
September 16	Monthly Meeting
October 4	Apple Fest
October 21	Monthly Meeting
November 18	Pot Luck

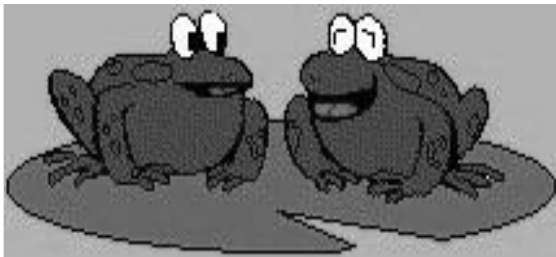
Water plants continued: ornamental value even when not in bloom. The white flowers are graceful arched spikes 4- 6 inches long and fragrant. The plant grows in sun and part shade in moist soil or water up to 6 inches deep. Its height is 18- 36 inches with a running spread. Another selection that is showy but slow to grow is 'Oregon Gold', an all-gold variety. The Chinese lizard tail grows in zones 4-11 with planting in 2-5 gallon pots. Propagation is by division of clumps in spring until summer.

Your Dues are Due if your label reads 4-15, 5-15 or anytime in 2014
 Please renew as soon as possible to continue receiving the newsletter.
 Send dues to
Jim Mowder, 3717 SE 31st ST, 66605

**THE TOPEKA AREA
 WATER GARDEN SOCIETY
 2015 OFFICERS:**

Tom Platis	President
Topeka	785-478-9514
Chris Newell	Vice President
Topeka	785-633-4854
Sherry Reed	Secretary
Topeka	785-408-5060
Jim Mowder	Treasurer
Topeka	785-267-0672

Meetings are usually held the third Wednesday of each month at Old Prairie Town (Ward Meade Park) unless otherwise publicized. Dues are \$15 per single or \$20 per family and can be sent to Jim Mowder, 3717 SE 31st ST, 66605



Check it out - www.tawgs.org

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Published Monthly, February to November by the Topeka Area Water Garden Society (TAWGS), a non-profit organization. TAWGS does not warrant the information in this newsletter. The opinions expressed are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Topeka Area Water Garden Society.

The Lily Pad encourages submission of articles pertaining to water gardening from the membership and other interested parties. Deadline is the third weekend of each month. Address input and/or questions to:

Diane Gruver, The Lily Pad Editor
 408 Emerald, Holton, KS 66436
 785-364-3046
fdgruver@embarqmail.com

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